

Rurouni Kenshin

TM

神無月

SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL
Story & Art by
Mobuhiro Watsuki

volume

16



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



FIGURE BOOM

...OR SO THEY SAY. IT'S ALL GOOD—FOR WATSUKI, ANYWAY, WHO STARTED COLLECTING "X-MEN" FIGURES THREE YEARS AGO. AND THE BOOM'S NOT JUST IN WESTERN ACTION FIGURES, EITHER—EVEN THE GARAGE KITS FOR TRULY OLD-SCHOOL JAPANESE HEROES AND HEROINES ARE SEEING NEW POPULARITY. YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO *BUY* THE ACTION FIGURES TO APPRECIATE THEM: WATSUKI, THE KIND OF GUY WHO'S BROUGHT TO TEARS BY THE *KIN'NIKU SHŌJO-TAI* SONG, "OMOCHA-YA MEGURI (TOY-STORE TRAWLER)," FINDS THAT HIS HEART JUST WON'T STOP POUNDING. THIS SPRING'S REALLY GETTING STARTED WITH A BANG!

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatō* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busō Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.

RUROUNI KENSHIN
VOL. 16: PROVIDENCE
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

English Adaptation/Gerard Jones
Translation/Kenichiro Yagi
Touch-Up Art & Lettering/Steve Dutro
Design/Matt Hinrichs
Editor/Avery Gotoh

Supervising Editor/Kit Fox
Managing Editor/Elizabeth Kawasaki
Director of Production/Noboru Watanabe
Vice President of Publishing/Alvin Lu
Vice President & Editor in Chief/Yumi Hoashi
Sr. Director of Acquisitions/Rika Inouye
Vice President of Sales & Marketing/Liza Coppola
Publisher/Hyoe Narita

RUROUNI KENSHIN © 1994 by NOBUHIRO WATSUKI. All rights reserved. First published in Japan in 1994 by SHUEISHA Inc., Tokyo. English translation rights in the United States of America and Canada arranged by SHUEISHA Inc. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the copyright holders.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, June 2005



www.viz.com



SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin

TM

MEIJI
SWORDSMAN
ROMANTIC
STORY

Vol.16

PROVIDENCE

STORY & ART BY
NOBUHIRO
WATSUKI



るるに剣心

仲宏

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called Battōsai. His name was legend among the pro-Imperialists or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, Himura Kenshin is *ruromi*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.

THUS FAR

Kenshin has journeyed to Kyoto to block the machinations of Shishio Makoto, the man who took Kenshin's place as *hitokiri* or government-sanctioned slayer of men. Along the way, Kenshin falls in with a girl—Miso, who intensely admires Shinomori Aoshi—and eventually fights a duel with Sôjirô, one of Shishio's *Juppangutana* or "Ten Swords." With his first *sakabatô* broken and now *sakabatô*, "Shinuchi," in hand, Kenshin seeks out Hiko Seijûn, master of the *Shinshû* school, to learn the ultimate secret of that school: *Amakakeru Ryû* or *Hirameki*. Together with Sanosuke and Saitô, Kenshin heads off Shishio's plans to burn down Kyoto and attack Tokyo by cannon from a battleship, leading to a final battle at Shishio's lair—a battle to which Kenshin goes, promising Miso that he'll bring back Aoshi. First, Sanosuke fights the fallen priest, "Bright King" Anji, defeating him with the newly learned "Mystery of Three Layers"—only for Anji to reveal that, while Kenshin is being distracted, most of the *Juppangutana* are attacking Aoi-Ya, the inn where Miso and the others are remaining a desperate effort to leaving Saitô a battle with Blind Man. Kenshin hurries to catch the *Juppangutana* opponent, Sôjirô—but now Aoshi stands in Kenshin's way. After a fierce battle, Kenshin is able to defeat Aoshi—without reverting to his suppressed *hitokiri* self.

Meanwhile, back at Aoi-Ya, Yahiko and the others defeat "Flighted" Hekka and "Giant Scythe" Kamatari and, just when the menace of Hagna or "Army of Destruction" Fuji seems most overwhelming, Hiko appears and challenges the giant to a duel, granting his opponent long-earned-for recognition as a fellow samurai. Eventually defeated by Hiko's Kuzuri-Ryusen, Fuji is nonetheless better for the experience, and Hiko's status as a "great" man is revealed. Back with Kenshin and Sôjirô, their battle begins, once news of the "Red-Red Earth" technique has also reached the Shôgun.

"Reduced Earth" technique of Sôjirô proves superior to the "God-Speed" of Kenshin, leaving the former hitokiri to wonder what comes next.

相楽左之助



Sagara Sanosuke

斎藤 一



Saitō Hajime

瀬田宗次郎



Seta Sōjirō

志々雄真実



Shishio Makoto

緋村剣心（人斬り抜刀斎）



Himura Kenshin
(Hitokiri Battōsai)

佐渡島方治 さどじまほうじ

Sadojima Hōji

駒形由美



Komagata Yumii

CONTENTS

RUROUNI KENSHIN

Meiji Swordsman Romantic Story

BOOK SIXTEEN: PROVIDENCE



ACT 130

**Sōjirō's Story:
Moonlight Encounter
7**

ACT 131

**Sōjirō's Story:
Feast of Thunder
25**

ACT 132

**Sōjirō's Story:
Smile in the Frozen Rain
43**

ACT 133

**Destruction of the Soul
63**

ACT 134

**The Second Secret
83**

ACT 135

**Those Who Gather,
Those Who Part
103**

ACT 136

**When Did the Battle Begin?
123**

ACT 137

**Fuel
143**

ACT 138

**Providence
163**



Act 130
Sōjirō's Story:
Moonlight
Encounter





...FOR
THE FIRST
TIME
TOOK A
CUT TO
THE BACK.

KENSHIN
...

HF
HF

VERY
BAD!!

THIS
IS
BAD...

"HEAVEN'S SWORD"
SŌJIRO REALLY
DOES STAND A
STEP ABOVE
HIMURA
BATTŌSAI!

THIS
IS
GOOD!

HE'LL FINISH
HIM OFF IN
ONE MORE
STRIKE!

ONE
MORE
STRIKE!

EH?

THAT'S
NOT...

...QUITE
RIGHT.







KENSHIN,
WHY
DIDN'T
YOU
ATTACK
?!

KID!
HEY!!

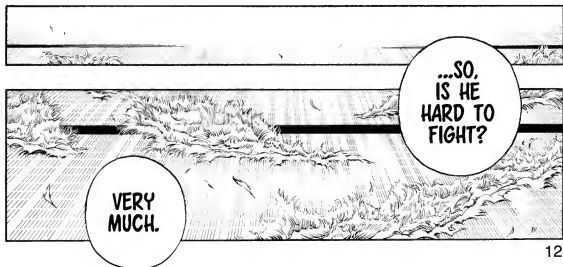


ALSO,
THESE
WOUNDS
NEED
TENDING
...
CAN
YOU
SPARE
SOME
BANDAGING
?

WHAT?!
HNG
THAT'S
SOMETHING
SAITO
MIGHT
SAY.

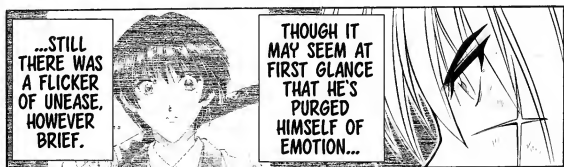
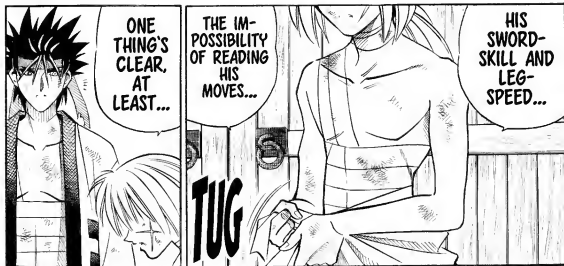
ATTACKING
CAN BE MORE
DIFFICULT
WHEN
THERE'S NO
DEFENSE TO
REACT
AGAINST.

THERE'S
NO CODE
AGAINST
IT!
IT'S
HIS OWN
FAULT FOR
LETTING
HIS GUARD
DOWN!



...SO,
IS HE
HARD TO
FIGHT?

VERY
MUCH.





**THAT
IS HIS
FATAL
WEAKNESS.**

**IN FACT,
SHISHIO-
SAN
SAYS...**

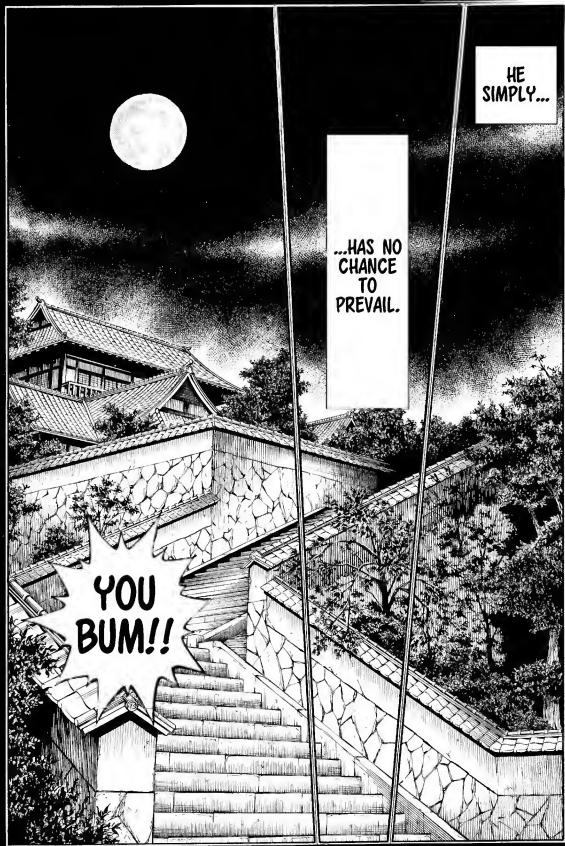


**AND YET,
HOWEVER
STRONG
HE MAY
BE...**

**...THERE'S
NO WAY HE
CAN DEFEAT
SHISHIO-SAN...
OR ME.**

**...THAT
HIMURA-SAN
WIELDS HIS
SWORD TO
PROTECT THE
WEAK ONLY,
VOWING NEVER
TO KILL.**





HE
SIMPLY...

...HAS NO
CHANCE
TO
PREVAIL.

YOU
BUM!!



**GLUB
GLUB**



I TOLD YOU
TO MOVE 100
BARRELS OF RICE
INTO THE WEST
STORAGE HOUSE
BEFORE SUNSET,
DIDN'T I?!

DON'T
TELL ME
YOU CAN'T...
IF I SAY
IT, YOU
DO IT!



BUT WHY
IS HE ALWAYS
SMILING, THOUGH?
HE DOESN'T
ACTUALLY THINK
OUR TAKING HIM
IN MEANS
ANYTHING...?

HE'D BETTER
NOT! WE MAY
HAVE HAD TO DO
IT FOR THE SAKE
OF APPEARANCE,
BUT HE'D BEST
NOT EXPECT
ANYTHING
FURTHER!

EVERYTHING
GOES TO
OUR OWN
CHILDREN...!

IT'S HARD
ENOUGH TO HAVE
RICE VALUES
DROPPING SINCE
THE NEW GOVERN-
MENT SWITCHED
THE TAX BASE

BUT TO FROM RICE
HAVE THE TO CASH!
OLD MAN DUMP
HIS MISTRESS'
SON ON US
AS WELL...!

THINK OF
HIM AS A GIFT.
DAD! YOU CAN
WORK HIM TO
DEATH AND
NEVER HAVE TO
PAY HIM.











SO
YOU
SAW...

...DID
YOU,
BOY?



Rurouni Kenshin



Act 131—Sōjirō's Story: Feast of Thunder



Act 131
Sōjiro's Story:
Feast of Thunder





THAT'S
TOO
BAD...

...BOY...

BUT I
HAVE NO
CHOICE.

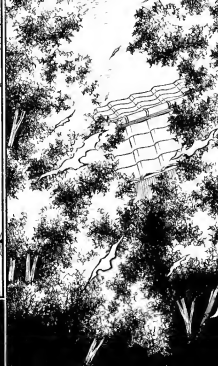
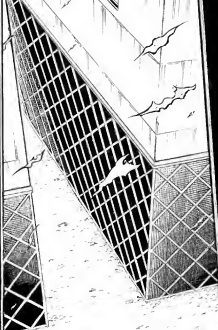
TP

TP

PREPARE
TO DIE!



...ARE YOU
SO HAPPY
TO DIE,
CHILD?





EH?



BOY!

JERR!



...



WHAT?
AHA
HA...

BRR

BRR

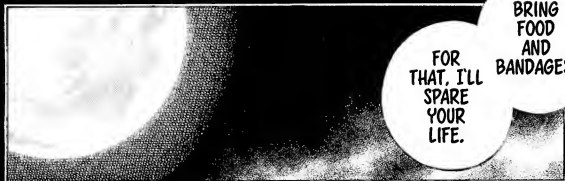
BRR

WHAT?



EH?

WHAT?



FOR
THAT, I'LL
SPARE
YOUR
LIFE.

BRING
FOOD
AND
BANDAGES.



I CAN
MOVE A
LITTLE
BETTER
NOW.

MM...

GRIP



DUCK



OLD
MAN?

UM.



I HAVE
A NAME.
SHISHIO.

I'M NOT
OLD ENOUGH
FOR THAT,
YET...

NOT
THAT YOU
CAN TELL,
WHEN I
LOOK LIKE
THIS.



...BAD
GUY?

...YOU'RE
A...



THEY USED
ME, AND
THEN TRIED
TO BURN ME
TO DEATH.

THEY
ARE THE
BAD
GUYS.



...YOU'RE
A GOOD
GUY!

SO
THEN...



SO...
SHISHIO-
SAN?

YES?

YOU JUST
KILLED...SOME
POLICEMEN.
DOES THAT
MEAN...



THEY'VE
SEARCHED
THE
MOUNTAINS.
NO
TRACE.

THE ONES
WHO WENT
AFTER HIM
HAVEN'T BEEN
SEEN FOR
THREE
DAYS.

DID YOU
HEAR,
BROTHER
?

TP TP



THAT
CRIMINAL
WHO'S
ON THE
LOOSE? AN
OFFICER...

...AND SHISHIO-
SAN HASN'T
LEFT THE
STORAGE
HOUSE.

THEY WON'T
FIND THEM.
THE BODIES
ARE BURIED
IN THE
FOREST...

...WAS JUST
HERE, TO
TALK TO
DAD ABOUT
IT.

SO
VERY
STRONG.



SŌJIRO!
HEY!!

IF SO, YOU'D
BEST LET ME
KNOW. DON'T
THINK YOU CAN
KEEP IT FROM
ME!

JERK

YOU'VE LIVED
OUTSIDE
THESE THREE
DAYS.

YOU
HEARD OR
SEEN
ANYTHING?

FUMMP

Y-
YES?

...IT'S
BECOMING
A
NUISANCE!
WHAT DO
WE DO
WITH THIS
RICE?

BROTHER...
HEY, HEY!
THIS HABIT
OF SWINGING
THE SWORD
WITHOUT
THINKING...

I'LL
CUT OFF
THAT
MURDERER'S
HEAD!!

THIS IS A
FINE CHANCE
TO LET MY
SWORDS BE
KNOWN!

LOOK
AT
THAT.



EH?

WHY ARE
YOU STILL
SMILING
AFTER
BEING
BEATEN?

SO.

VILLAINY
COMES IN
MANY
FORMS.

GLINT

EH?

WHAT
?

WHAT?

...AND
THEY WERE
MEAN TO
ME...I'D GET
MAD, OR
CRY.

BACK THEN,
WHEN I
FIRST GOT
HERE...

...BUT I
WASN'T
LIKE THIS
BEFORE.

FP

HA
HA...IT'S
FUNNY...



...THE HARDER
THEY'D BEAT
ME, FOR
BEING A
BRAT.

BUT THE
MORE I
GOT MAD,
OR CRIED...



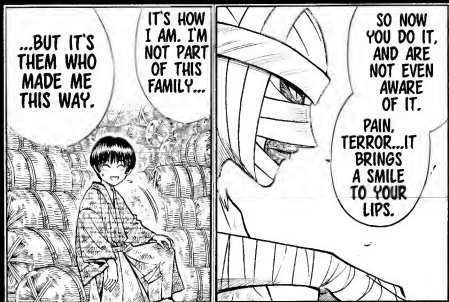
...THEY'D GET
TIRED OF
BEATING ME
AND QUIT.

IF I HELD IT
IN, THOUGH,
AND SMILED...

...I
HAD TO
KEEP
SMILING.

NO
MATTER
HOW MUCH
IT
...OR HURT...
HOW
ASHAMED
I WAS...

YOU'RE
WRONG.



...BUT IT'S
THEM WHO
MADE ME
THIS WAY.

IT'S HOW
I AM. I'M
NOT PART
OF THIS
FAMILY...

SO NOW
YOU DO IT,
AND ARE
NOT EVEN
AWARE
OF IT.
PAIN,
TERROR...IT
BRINGS
A SMILE
TO YOUR
LIPS.



IN THIS
WORLD,
THE WEAK
ARE THE
SUSTENANCE
OF THE
STRONG.

THE
STRONG
LIVE,
THE
WEAK
DIE.

NO ONE
CAN
"MAKE"
YOU INTO
ANYTHING.

NO SMILE
WILL SPARE
YOU FROM
THAT
ETERNAL
TRUTH.

IT'S
YOUR OWN
FAULT, FOR
BEING
WEAK.



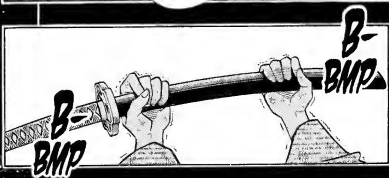


THE
STRONG
LIVE...

RRRM
RRRM

...MY
BURNS
ITCH...

THERE'LL
BE A
STORM
TONIGHT.



...AND
THE
WEAK...

IN THIS
WORLD,
THE WEAK
ARE THE
SUSTENANCE
OF THE
STRONG...

B-
BMP



Rurouni Kenshin





Act 132

Sōjirō's Story: Smile in the Frozen Rain





IN
THIS
WORLD,
THE
STRONG
LIVE...



...THE
WEAK
DIE.



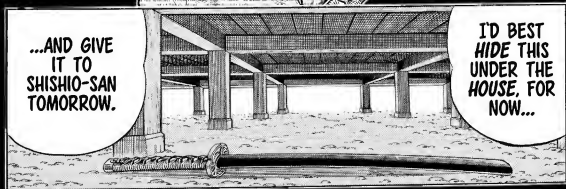
...WHILE
THE
WEAK...



EVEN
SO...

RRMM
RRMM
RRMBL







SŌJIRŌ!
WHY,
YOU...!

WORSE TO
LIE TO
ME!

BAD
ENOUGH
TO LIE...



DO YOU
WANT TO
RUIN ME?!

LITTLE
RUNT!!

BRINGING
THE POLICE
DOWN ON
MY HEAD?!

TUM
M
M
P

TELL ME,
WHERE
IS THE
TRAITOR?!

WELL,
I WON'T
LET
YOU!!

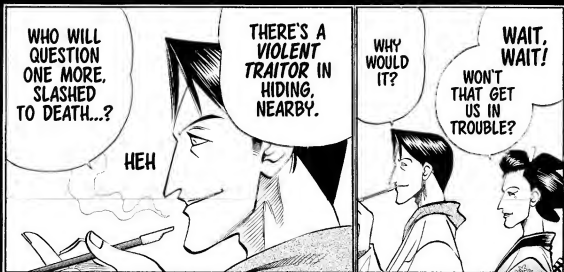
I'VE HAD
ENOUGH
OF THIS
DOG!

LET ME
FINISH
HIM OFF!

KLEEN

HH

HH



...OF
THE
STRONG,
IN
THIS
WORLD.

DIRTY,
NASTY,
UNGRATEFUL
LITTLE
BRUTE!!

THE
WEAK
ARE
THE
SUSTEN-
ANCE...

HERE'S
YOUR
CH

IF WE
REPORT
THE
TRAITOR,
WE MAY
EVEN
RECEIVE
A
REWARD!

...AND
THE
WEAK—

THE
STRONG
LIVE...

COME
BACK
HERE!

YAAH!

HMP

DMIDMIDM

SOMEONE...

HELP!!

H
H

H
H
H
H

ANYONE!!

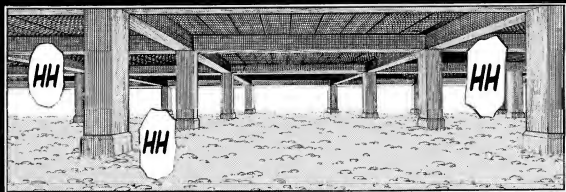
HELP
ME!!

HE'S
GONE!

TP

WHERE'S
HE
HIDING?!

DM
DM



GOT YOU!

SNEAKY LITTLE RAT!



HELP ME... SHISHIO-SAN.

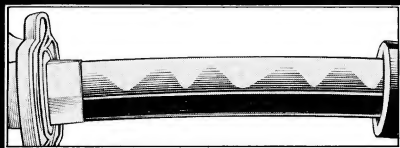
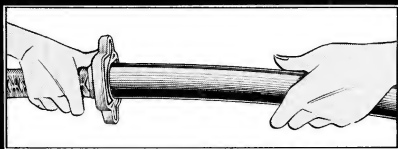


HO... THAT'S AN EXPENSIVE SWORD!





IN THIS
WORLD,
THE STRONG
LIVE...



AND THE
WEAK...

DIE!



EEEEEEEE

WHAT A
COWARDLY
CRY!
HE
IS A
WHORE'S
SON.



TMM



HEE-HEE!
LOOK!
IT'S A...



...HEAD.



IN THIS
WORLD,
THE
STRONG...

...EAT
THE
FLESH...

HYAH

...OF
THE
WEAK.





...CRYING?

YOU'RE
NOT...





BUT YOU
CAN BE
STRONGEST...
AFTER ME,
OF COURSE.



...FIGHTING
THAT
MAN IS...

...MAKING
ME...
ANGRY.



...WHY
WASN'T I
PROTECTED,
BACK
THEN?

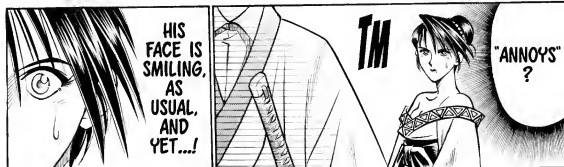
IF HELPING
THE WEAK
WERE EVEN
POSSIBLE...

SŌJIRŌ?

SOMEHOW...

Rurouni Kenshin





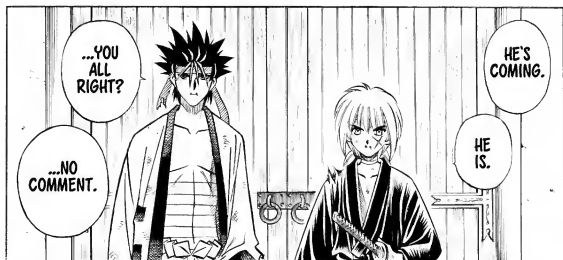




Act 133

Destruction of the Soul

仲伸
和月





ONE
MOVE
SHORT OF
SHUKUCHI.

HERE
GOES.



RIGHT...

...OR
LEFT?





WHAT'S THIS?!



NOWHERE
TO
RUN—!

NOT JUST
SIDEWAYS,
BUT
VERTICALLY,
TOO—HITTING
FROM ALL
DIRECTIONS!









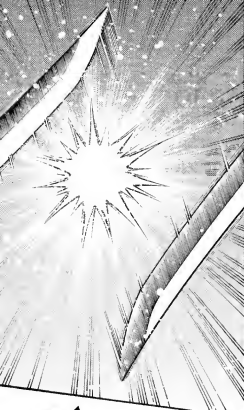
NK!



...WHY
WERE YOU
NOWHERE
TO BE
FOUND?



...WHEN
I
NEEDED
HELP...



IF A
SWORD CAN
PROTECT
THE WEAK...

...WHERE
WERE YOU
TO PROTECT
ME?





IT'S
SHISHIO-SAN
WHO IS
CORRECT!!

NO ONE
WAS THERE
TO PROTECT
ME!

TNG
TNG

— WHICH
MEANS —

TNG
TNG
TNG

WHAT
PROTECTION
I HAD WAS
IN THE TRUTH
SHISHIO-SAN
TAUGHT
ME —

— AND
IN ONE,
SHARP
SWORD!



...HE CAN
READ THE
MOVES—NO
MATTER HOW
FAST THE
OPPONENT!

!!

I KNEW
IT!! IF
THERE'S
EMOTION,
ANY OF
IT...

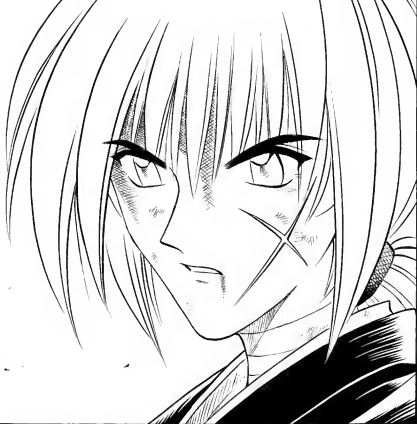
KH!!





**IF
IT'S
NOT
TOO
LATE...**

**...CAN
THERE
BE
ANOTHER
CHANCE?**



WAAA
A
H

I
WAS
CRYING
!

MY
FACE...WAS
SMILING
IN THAT
FROZEN
RAIN, BUT...

AND YET...
IS IT SO
WRONG TO
BE WEAK?

"THE
STRONG
LIVE,
AND THE
WEAK
DIE."

...REALLY,
I WAS
CRYING.

I KILLED
PEOPLE...
BUT I
DIDN'T
WANT TO
KILL
THEM.

THAT IS
SHISHIO-SAN'S
TRUTH, AS
TAUGHT TO
ME.



I GO
CRAZY
FIGHTING
YOU!

HH



HH HIMURA-
SAN...YOU
ARE AN
IMPEDIMENT.

YOUR
EXISTENCE...
IS AN
IMPEDIMENT.

HH



I'LL KILL
YOU WITH
THE VERY
NEXT
STRIKE!!

I DON'T
CARE WHAT'S
RIGHT, OR
WRONG!

HH

HH

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 134—The Second Secret

SLAUGHTERED
THE FOSTER
FAMILY THAT
ABUSED HIM
AT THE AGE
OF EIGHT.

HSH

SETA SŌJIRO.
BORN
KANAGAWA
PREFECTURE,
FIRST YEAR
OF BUNKYŪ
(1861).

IN ROLE AS
RIGHT-HAND TO
SHISHIO MAKOTO,
WOULD GO ON
TO KILL MANY
MORE, INCLUDING
MINISTER OF
INTERNAL AFFAIRS
ŌKUBO TOSHIMICHI.

TP

IN
THE
WAY.

...

TM



...HE'S...

AND
NOW...

KLEEEN

COMING.

ARE YOU
READY?



Act 134
The Second
Secret

仲宏
月



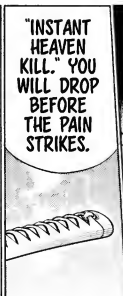
HE'S STAYING
WITH HIS
SPEED.

BATTŌJUTSU
STANCE.
RIGHT
HAND'S
DOWN
A BIT...



IF IT
HITS, IT
REALLY
WILL BE
"SHUNTEN-
SATSU."

A CHARGE
WITH
SHUKUCHI...
THEN HEAVEN'S
SWORD
BATTŌ-
JUTSU.



"INSTANT
HEAVEN
KILL." YOU
WILL DROP
BEFORE
THE PAIN
STRIKES.



SHUNTEN-
SATSU.

THE
ONLY
MOVE
I'VE
NAMED.



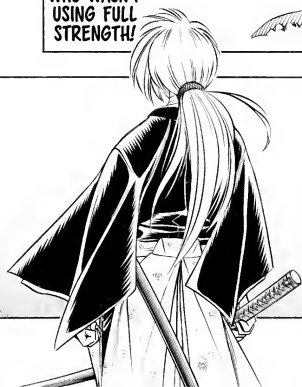
HE'S JUST
HAD HIS
BUTT HANDED
TO HIM BY
SOMEONE
WHO WASN'T
USING FULL
STRENGTH!

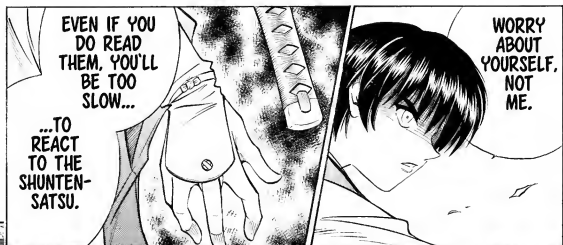
YEAH, AND
HOW CAN
HE BE?!



...HE FIGHTS
FROM A
DISADVANTAGE.

AS
USUAL...





THAT'S A
BATTŌJUTSU
STANCE!!

HE
SHEATHED
HIS
SWORD!

IT'S
GOTTA
BE...

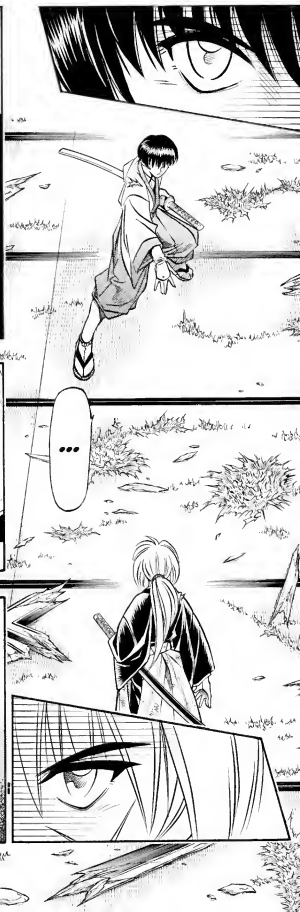
AT
THIS
STAGE
OF THE
FIGHT?!

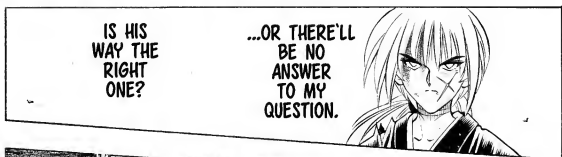
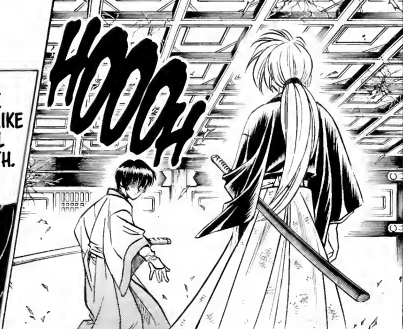
あま
か
ける
ひ
ら
め
き
**天
翔
龍
閃!!**

AMAKAKERU
RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI!!

ひ
て
ん
み
つ
る
ぎ
-
り
yū...
**飛
天
御
劍
流**
お
う
ぎ
**奥
義**

THE SECRET
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ...







IT'S
TOO
FAST
TO
SEE!!

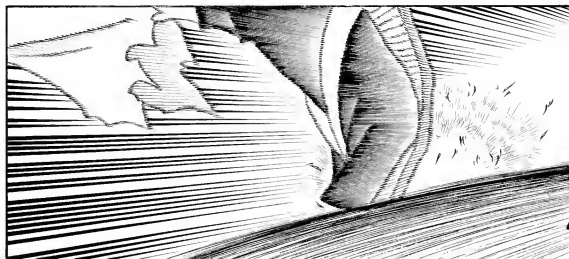


SHUKUCHI
!!

IT'S—



HE'S
GONE!





OF
COURSE!

KENSHIN
?!

IN
BATTŌJUTSU,
SŌJIRO HAS
THE SPEED
BUT KENSHIN
HAS THE
SKILL!

...HE DOESN'T
JUST WAIT, BUT
GOES INTO "GOD-
SPEED" SHINSOKU
AND THEN RELEASES
THE AMAKAKERU
RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI,
MAKING OVERALL
SPEED ABOUT
EQUAL.

AND SO,
TO COUNTER
SHUNTENSATSU,
WHICH IS
BATTŌJUTSU
FOLLOWED BY
SHUKUCHI...

THE
FACTOR THAT
WILL DECIDE
THE WINNER...



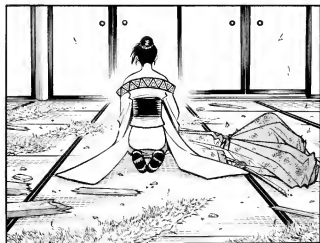


...WILL
BE...



...OF
THE
MOVE
!!

...THE
POWER
...





I DIDN'T
THINK IT
POSSIBLE!

TO REACH
SUCH POWER...
BY ADHERING
TO HIS VOW
NEVER TO
KILL...



THIS IS
JUST...THE
OPPOSITE
OF...OUR
BATTLE AT
SHINGETSU
VILLAGE.



YOU'RE
NOT
SAYING,
BOY,
THAT...



I'M
THE ONE
WHO WAS
WRONG.

THIS
DUEL
SHOWED
ME
THAT.



...FIRST
YOU HAVE
TO TEAR
IT ALL
DOWN.

HEH

TO FIX A
BUILDING
THAT WAS
BUILT
WRONG...





YOU'RE
A HARSH
MAN,
HIMURA-
SAN.

FLOP



THE TRUTH
MUST BE
FOUND NOT
THROUGH
BATTLES, BUT
OVER A
LIFETIME...

...AS ONE
MAKES
AMENDS FOR
THE CRIMES
ONE HAS
COMMITTED.



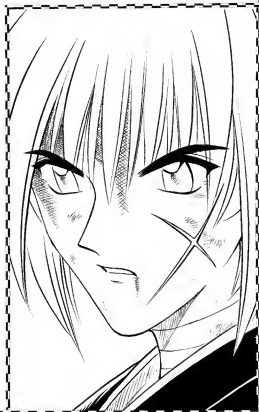
YOU
THINK
SO?

FAR MORE
TOUGH
THAN
SHISHIO-
SAN.

YOU
DON'T
GIVE UP
ANSWERS
EASILY.



Rurouni Kenshin



Act 135
Those Who
Gather, Those
Who Part



YOU WON'T NEED YUMI-SAN TO GUIDE YOU AFTER THIS.

IF YOU FOLLOW THE PATH, YOU'LL FIND SHISHIO-SAN.

DNDNDNDNDN

YOU WON'T NEED YUMI-SAN TO GUIDE YOU AFTER THIS.

IF YOU FOLLOW THE PATH, YOU'LL FIND SHISHIO-SAN.

DADA DADA DADA DADA

YOU WON'T
NEED YUMI-SAN
TO GUIDE YOU
AFTER THIS.

IF YOU
FOLLOW THE
PATH, YOU'LL
FIND SHISHIO-
SAN.

DNDNDNDNDNDN

NO...NOT HIS WOUNDS.

HIM? HE'LL BE FINE. NOTHING EVEN CLOSE TO FATAL.

NO...NOT HIS WOUNDS.

HIM? HE'LL BE FINE. NOTHING EVEN CLOSE TO FATAL.

WE GOTTA KEEP MOVING.

THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO DO FOR HIM.

...OH. WELL, IT'S UP TO HIS HEART, NOW.

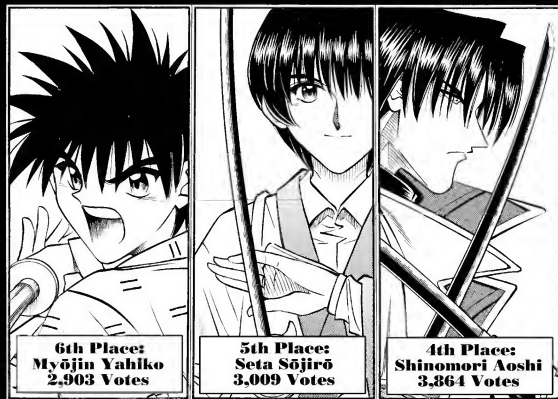
THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO DO FOR HIM.

...OH. WELL, IT'S UP TO HIS HEART, NOW.

...YOU'RE RIGHT.



Act Those Who Gather, Results of the

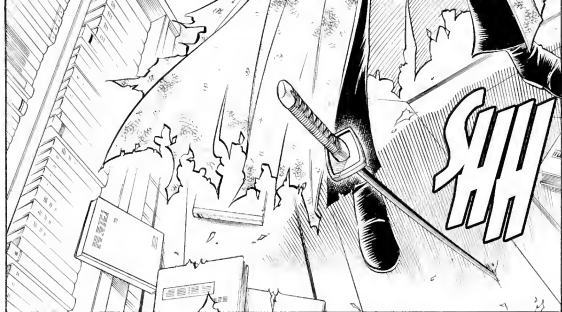


135 Those Who Part 3rd Popularity Poll



*These results are based on a poll conducted in the pages of WEEKLY SHONEN JUMP, Japan.
Who's your favorite Kenshin character? Send your answers to:
SHONEN JUMP c/o VIZ LLC, P.O. Box 27010, San Francisco, CA 94107
ATTN: Himura Kenshin Popularity Contest

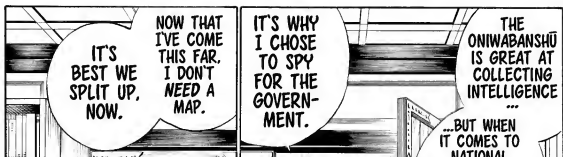
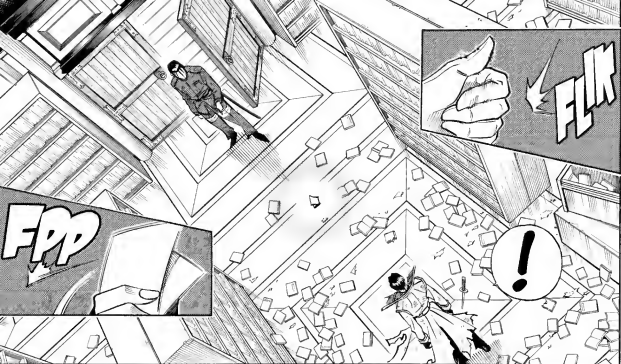
11th: Sagara Sōzō 12th: Okita Sōshi 13th: Shishio Makoto
14th: Han'nyū 15th: Takani Megumi (and so on...)





SEEMS
YOU'VE
HAD A
ROUGH TIME
OF IT.







SOMETHING
LIKE
THAT.



THIS
WAR WILL
SHAPE THE
FUTURE
OF THE
NATION.

WE
CAN'T
AFFORD
NOT TO
WIN IT.

WELL...



THEN WHAT
BECOMES
OF YOUR
DUEL?



THAT'S
SOMETHING
THAT'S BEEN
GOING ON
SINCE
THE
BAKUMATSU.

WHAT
WOULD YOU
DO IF
BATTOSAI
WERE TO
DIE?

THEN I
SUPPOSE
WHOEVER
SURVIVES,
WINS.

HMPH.

IF ONLY...
HE AND
I COULD
HAVE
FOUGHT
THEN.

FORMER
3RD UNIT
SHINSEN-
GUMI
CAPTAIN,
SAITŌ
HAJIME.

BECAUSE YOU
FOUGHT BATTŌSAI,
HIS EYES AND THE
EYES OF THE
ENEMY HAVE BEEN
Distracted...

YOU'VE
SERVED
YOUR
PURPOSE.

DURING THE
BAKUMATSU,
KYOTO WAS
FILLED WITH
MEN LIKE
HIM.

LEAVING
ME TO
MOVE AS A
SHADOW.

I'M...
LINGERING.

THE
AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI...

STAGGER

...SECRET
?

THE
PRESENT.
NOT THE
PAST.

THE
PRESENT
IS THE
TIME TO
FIGHT!

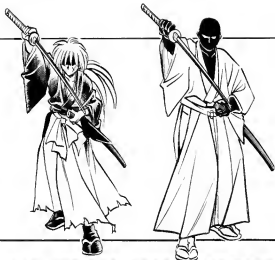
IT'S—

YES...
FOR ONE,
CLEAR
MOMENT, I
SAW IT.

...THE
LEFT...

...FOOT?!

HE FOLLOWED
THAT WITH A
QUICK LEFT.
BUT IN ORDER
NOT TO CUT
HIS LEG OR
LOSE THE
MOMENTUM OF
THE SWING...



TO AVOID
SLASHING
YOURSELF, YOU
TRADITIONALLY
LEAD WITH
THE RIGHT
FOOT.

...TURNING
HIMURA-SAN'S
SHINSOKU
"GOD-SPEED"
INTO THE
EVEN FASTER
AMAKAKERU
RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI.

...HE BROUGHT
IN THAT FINAL
STEP JUST AN
INSTANT AFTER
DRAWING HIS
SWORD. THAT
STEP ADDS
FORCE AND
ACCELERATION...

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE
WITH EVEN ONE
GLIMPSE
BACKWARD...

...TOWARD
WISHING
TO LIVE...OR
WISHING
TO DIE.

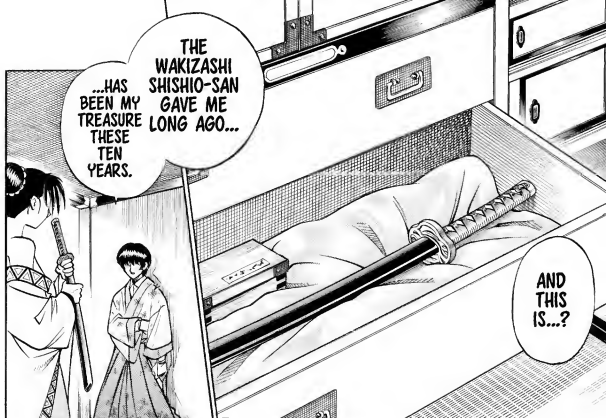
IT'S ONE STEP
FORWARD
INTO THE
THIN ZONE
BETWEEN
LIFE AND
DEATH.

...WITH
JUST
ONE
STEP?!

YES.
BUT IT
ISN'T
EASY.



AND SO, IF HE
CONCENTRATES
ON HIMURA-SAN'S
LEFT FOOT, AND
NOT ON HIS EYES
OR ARMS, HE'LL
BE ABLE TO SEE
THE BLOW COMING.



...HAS
BEEN MY
TREASURE
THESE
TEN
YEARS.

THE
WAKIZASHI
SHISHIO-SAN
GAVE ME
LONG AGO...

AND
THIS
IS...?



...RETURN
IT TO
HIM.

PLEASE...



SHISHIO-SAN
AND HIS
BLADE SAVED
ME FROM
DEATH.

THAT
WILL
NEVER
CHANGE.

I CANNOT
SAY THAT
HE WAS
WRONG.

BUT,
BOY...

YOU'RE
NOT
SAYING
...!

THAT
MIGHT
PERHAPS
BE
BEST.

...MM.

BUT, AS
HIMURA-SAN
SAID...

I NEED
TO FIND
MY ANSWERS
ON MY
OWN.

OH, HE
HARDLY
NEEDS
HELP
FROM
ME...!

PLEASE
DO LOOK
AFTER
SHISHIO-
SAN.

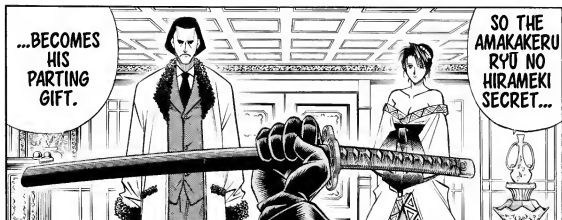
...I
KNOW.
TAKE
CARE OF
YOUR-
SELF.

NO,
THAT'S...
NOT
WHAT I
MEAN.

KREEE

BAM

I'M
AFRAID I
MUST NOW
LEAVE
YOU.



...COMES
DOWN
TO MY
STRENGTH
!!

IN
THE
END,
AS I
THOUGHT,
IT
ALL...



The Secret Life of Characters (26)

AMENDMENT

—Seta Sōjirō—

Sōjirō—always popular, always a struggle. As has been previously mentioned, although he is based on the Okita Sōshi of Shiba Ryōtarō's *Shinsengumi Keppuroku* ("Blood-Record of the Shinsengumi"), I personally found him a difficult personality to convey. On top of that, because this particular story came at the end of the year, I had little extra time to think it over. My editor was a huge help, actually. (He always has understood Sōjirō better than me.)

Since the historical Okita Sōshi dies young, many fans have worried that Sōjirō will go young, too, but it's always been my plan to have him stick around. Despite having abandoned all efforts to think for himself and letting Shishio handle everything, Sōjirō's not the type to wrap things up by fleeing into death—rather, he'll suffer through life, atoning for all that he's done. It's a harsh way of thinking, but as a human being, it's the only choice he can make. (Think of Shishio as a leader of a radical religious group and Sōjirō as a believer filled with crazed devotion, as though he's just handed over his brain. Does that put it in a different perspective?)

Though, for whatever reasons (including family and society), life may be a struggle, so long as one is born into the human race, one must never abandon one's efforts to think for oneself...or so Watsuki believes.

Still, whatever it is I may say about Sōjirō's personality, no doubt he'll keep smiling, and living that life of indifference. Sōjirō, like Anji, is a character I feel I haven't fully realized; I'd like to bring him back, if possible. Not that any plans are in place at the moment....





SHISHIO
MAKOTO

るるる
志々雄
真実

RUROUNI
KENSIN

Act 136

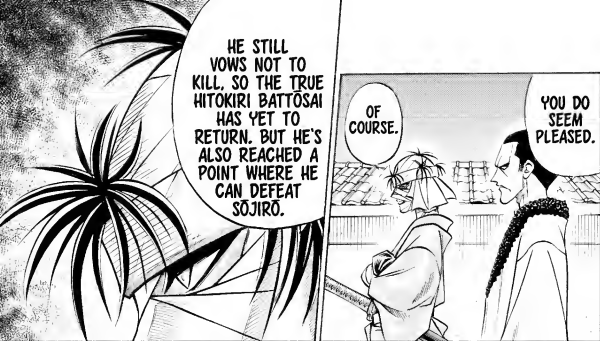
**When Did the
Battle Begin?**

和伸
月宏



HOW
MANY YEARS,
SINCE I'VE
FOUGHT?

HEH
HEH...



HE STILL
VOWS NOT TO
KILL, SO THE TRUE
HITOKIRI BATTOSAI
HAS YET TO
RETURN. BUT HE'S
ALSO REACHED A
POINT WHERE HE
CAN DEFEAT
SÔJIRÔ.

OF
COURSE.

YOU DO
SEEM
PLEASED.



NOT TO
MENTION
THE BONUS
OF THE
AMAKAKERU
RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI!

HEH

AS A SWORDSMAN,
THIS DUEL
MAKES MY BLOOD
BOIL AS HOT AS
THE THOUGHT
OF CONQUERING
THE NATION...



RENGOKU
IS RUINED,
HALF OUR MEN
ARE CAPTURED,
AND THE
JUPPONGATANA
HAVE BEEN
CAPTURED.

I FIND
I CAN'T
AGREE.

THIS
WILL DELAY
OUR PLANS
TO RETAKE
JAPAN BY A
DECADE.

ON THE
DAY WE
REACHED
KYOTO, YOU
SAID...
"I WILL
ENJOY IT,
WHICHEVER
WAY IT
GOES."



I BEG
OF YOU,
SHISHIO-
SAMA.

DESTROY
BATTOSAI
AND HIS
MINIONS.
FOREVER.

ONCE
AGAIN,
JAPAN WILL
BE RULED
BY
WARLORDS!

HYAH

...BUT
ONLY
THEN!

THE
BUILDING OF AN
EVEN GREATER
ORGANIZATION
CAN BEGIN...

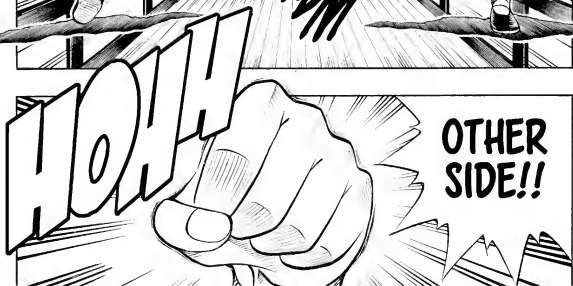
IT
NEEDS
THE
STRENGTH
OF
SHISHIO
MAKOTO!!

THIS AGE
NEEDS A
MAN
WHO'LL
UNITE OUR
STRENGTHS
...

IN THIS AGE, AS
THE SPRAWLING
POWERS OF
EUROPEAN EMPIRES
COLONIZE THE WEAK
NATIONS OF THE
WORLD, JAPAN MUST
BE REBORN IN
STRENGTH! THERE
IS NO OTHER ROAD
TO SURVIVAL!

IF
I MUST...
I WILL
BECOME AN
ABOMINATION
!!

IT IS
ALL FOR
SHISHIO-
SAMA!



!!

YOU'RE
LATE. I'M
TIRED OF
WAITING.

SHISHIO-
SAMA IS AT
THE DUEL
PIT. FOLLOW
ME.

BUT
HOW—
WHAT—
?!

ARGH!

...YES.

HUH?

KENSHIN,
LET'S JUST
GO.

TCH



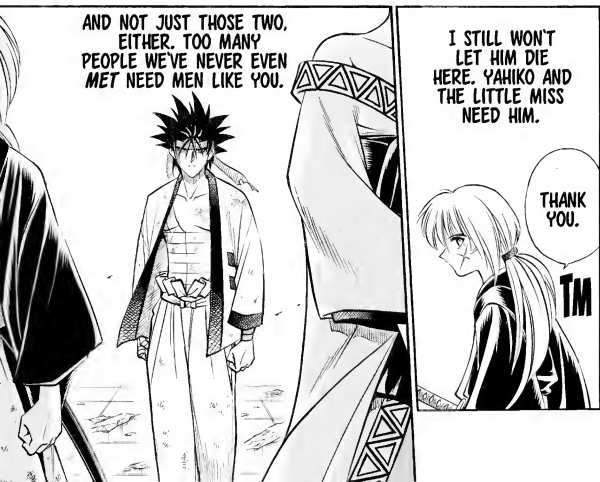


YOUR
CONCERN IS
ADMIRABLE,
TRULY.



THE FIGHT
IS BETWEEN
SHISHIO
AND THIS
ONE ALONE.





I'M GONNA
BRING THE
FUTAE NO
KIWAMI "DUAL
LAYERS"
FULL-ON!!



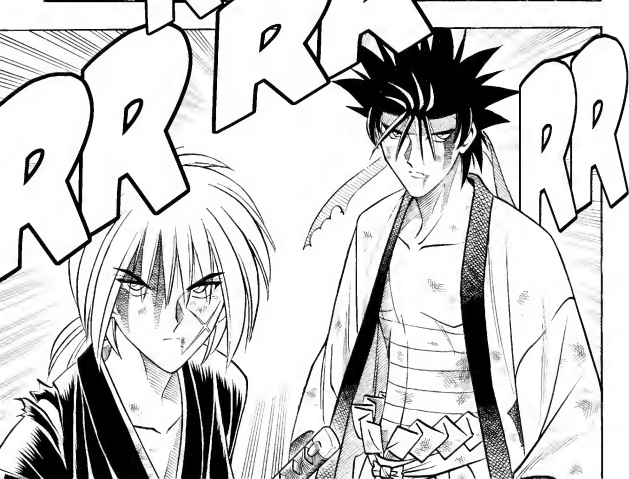
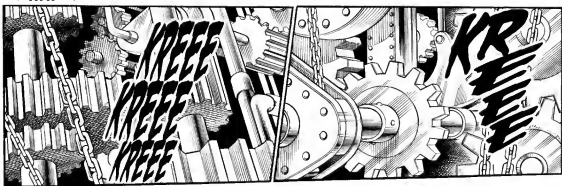
EVEN IF
IT MAKES
ME A LIAR,
WHEN IT
COMES
DOWN
TO IT...

ONCE
I OPEN
THIS DOOR,
THAT'S
IT.

BEYOND
THESE
DOORS IS
SHISHIO-
SAMA'S
PRIVATE
ARENA, "THE
INFERNAL
HALL."

THERE'S
NO
TURNING
BACK.









AN ARENA
HANGING OFF
THE EDGE OF
A CLIFF.
NOWHERE
TO RUN.



THAT
SMELL...THE
TORCHES.
THEY'RE
BURNING FLAME-
WATER!



...AS
HE
SAYS.

ONCE WE TAKE
CONTROL OF
JAPAN, WE WILL
USE IT AS A
FOOTHOLD
INTO THE REST
OF THE
WORLD!

YOU ARE
VULGAR,
AS
USUAL.

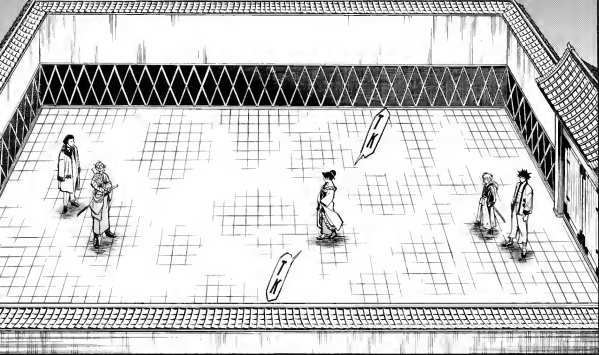
THOSE
WHO KNOW
CALL IT
"PETROLEUM." IN
MORE ADVANCED
NATIONS, IT'S
REPLACING COAL
AS A POWER-
SOURCE.



...SHISHIO
MAKOTO.

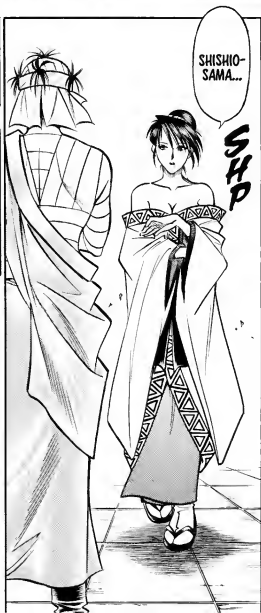
K
R
E
E
E





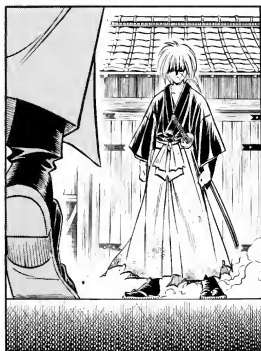
...DON'T
FORGET
...

...TO
CARE
FOR YOUR-
SELF.





OH...



FIFTEEN
MINUTES
...

...IS
ALL IT
WILL
TAKE.





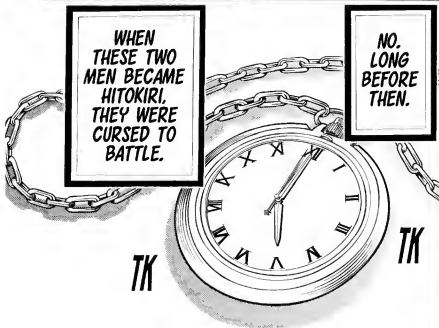
WHEN
OKUBO
TOSHIMICHI
WAS
ASSASSIN-
ATED?



WHEN
HIMURA
KENSIN
BECAME
RUROUNI?



WHEN
SHISHIO
MAKOTO
WAS
ENGULFED
IN
FLAMES?



WHEN
THESE TWO
MEN BECAME
HITOKIRI,
THEY WERE
CURSED TO
BATTLE.

NO.
LONG
BEFORE
THEN.

WHEN
DID THE
BATTLE
BEGIN...?

+

XI

T-TKK

XII

AND
NOW...

THERE
MUST
BE A
WINNER!!

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 137—Fuel





KRAK

KRAK

GOOD. HE'S
WOUNDED.
BUT HE'S
GOT HIS
STRENGTH.

nrg

和伸
月夜

Act 137—Fuel



HOMURA
DAMA,
"BURNING
SOUL"!!

焰 ほむら

霊 だま

!!!

DID YOU
BURN THE
TIP OF YOUR
SWORD WITH
FRICTION
AGAINST THE
SHEATH...?!

TING!!

!

HEH.



RAAAAAA



NO. IF HE WERE
JUST PRODUCING
FLAME BY FRICTION,
BATTŌJUTSU SHOULD
DO THE SAME.



SHAAAAH!!

SOMETHING
ELSE
LIT THIS
FLAME!!



THE FLAME
ITSELF CAN'T
DAMAGE
MUCH!

CALM
DOWN.
DON'T
BE
FOOLED!



WORK
ON
DEFLECT-
ING
THAT!!

CONCEN-
TRATE
ON THE
BLADE!

WHAT—?







KENSHIN!!

SHISHIO-SAMA!!

BOBBLE...

FM

HAVE YOU EVER KNOWN PAIN FROM BOTH SLASHING AND BURNING, BEFORE?

HOW DO YOU LIKE MY BURNING SOUL, BATTOSAI?





THE NATURE
OF YOUR
HOMURA
DAMA IS
CLEAR.



AND YET,
DESPITE THE
SHARPNESS OF
YOUR SWING...
THE WOUNDS
AREN'T VERY
DEEP.

NNG

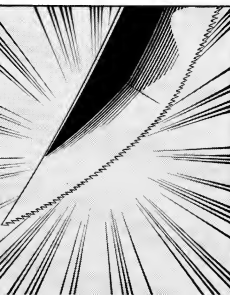
NOT
REALLY
...



WHAT IS
BURNING...

THE FRICTION
FROM THE
BLADE IS
ONLY FOR
IGNITION.

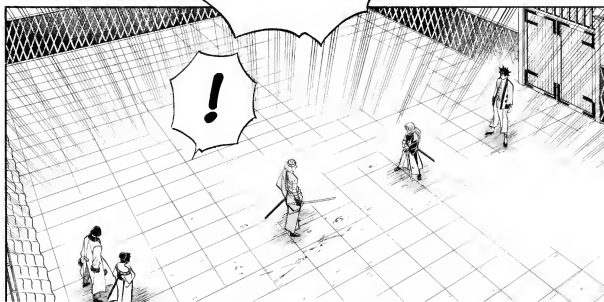
THE BLADE
ITSELF
ISN'T
BURNING.





...IS THE
SUBSTANCE
YOUR SAW-LIKE
BLADE HAS
SHAVED OFF
THOSE YOU'VE
KILLED...

**HUMAN
FLESH!!**





BUT TO
CALL IT A
"SAW-LIKE
BLADE" IS
NOT QUITE
FAIR.

THIS IS A
RELATIVE OF
YOUR
SAKABATŌ,
"SHINUCHI!"



HE
DISCOVERED
SHISHIO-SAMA'S
SECRET WITH
JUST ONE
BLOW?

HIMURA
BATTŌSAI
IS NOT A
MAN TO
TAKE
LIGHTLY!



VERY
GOOD.

YOU SHOW
THE SAME
INSIGHT NOW
AS WHEN YOU
DESTROYED
MY SHIP.



BUT IF ONE CHIPS IT
FROM THE BEGINNING,
WITHOUT COMPROMISING
THE SHARPNESS, ONE
CREATES A SWORD
THAT WILL SLASH
ALWAYS WITH THE
SAME SHARPNESS.

ANY GREAT
BLADE WILL
CHIP AND
GROW STICKY
WITH USE.



I MAKE
TRUE IN
MY SWORD
WHAT IS
TRUE IN
LIFE.

THE
FLESH OF
THE WEAK
IS THE
FOOD
OF THE
STRONG.

GRIN

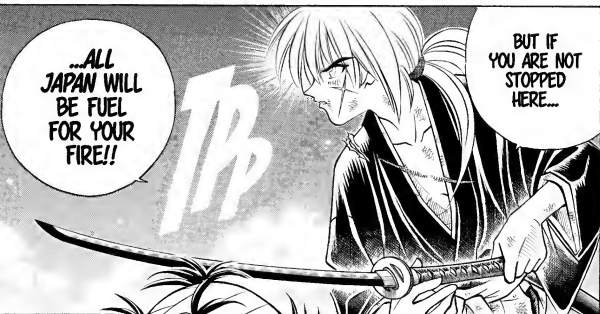
THIS FINAL
STAGE SATSUNJIN
SWORD, THE
PEERLESS
"MUGENJIN,"
CREATED BY
ARAI SHAKKŪ...

...USES THE
NUMBER OF PEOPLE
IT'S KILLED AS
A SOURCE OF ITS
POWER. THIS IS
MY FIRST SECRET
BLOW.



SAME
HITOKIRI PAST...
AND WIELDING
SWORDS MADE
BY THE SAME
SMITH. BUT
THEIR SOULS
ARE
COMPLETELY
OPPOSITE.





STRIKE,
SHISHIO
MAKOTO
!!

SO
FAST!!

閃龍翔!!
せんりゅうしょう

RYŪSHŌSEN
"DRAGON
FLIGHT"!!

飛天御剣流
ひてんみつきんりゅう

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...



I SAW
THAT MOVE
AT
SHINGETSU
VILLAGE.

YOU
CAN'T STOP
ME WITH
A MOVE
I'VE SEEN.

...YOUR
FUEL
TO MY
FIRE?

NOW,
BATTOSAI,
WILL YOU
ADD...





**KENSHIN
!!**

CRASH

RRP

"FREE TALK"

Long time no see, Watsuki here. In the (original serialization), the *Kyōka* arc has ended and the new arc has begun. I'm doing pretty okay, staying healthy and working hard.

I'd like to start off by talking about action figures (as you may have guessed, from the inside cover). They're totally hot at the moment. How hot, you ask? So hot that Watsuki's own deeply hidden otaku soul has begun to stir! (And how lame a sentence is that?) In any event, by the time this (compiled) volume is out (in Japan), I'll have acquired the original "Getter 1." If they decide to issue "Getter 2" and "Getter 3," my happiness will be that much more complete.

As far as import toys go, I still pick up *X-Men* and *Spawn* figures from a few other series I like, along the way. Despite the craze, I try to remind myself about the choosing carefully thing. Maybe it's just me, but shelling out 30,000 to 40,000 yen just for one figure isn't my kind of hobby. I do hope it's not a fad that'll go away, though, and that action figures eventually become a legitimate toy-genre. (For that matter, I'm hoping American comics aren't just a fad here, either!)

As for games...let's talk about the highly anticipated ("Dark Stalkers" sequel) "Vampire Savior." As I write this, I've played only a few times, but Morrigan seems to have become weaker, which disappoints me. Watsuki was nevertheless charmed by her, as usual, and getting defeated in "versus" mode is fine so long as it's by her. I also like Gallou. As for the new characters, Loligan—okay, not the "Lolita" mode, but Lilith, the real character—is interesting—her relationship with Morrigan, if not the character herself. Since I already play so many characters, though, I had to pass. I'll get to them once I'm a bit more settled in. All the fighting games Watsuki gets hooked on seem to have samurai or robots or monsters...no normal humans. Should I be worried?

Changing the topic, thank you for all your fan letters...and not just the letters of support, either, but the critical ones, too. I get a new bit of perspective every time I read one. There were lots of complaints about the author's comments in Volume 14—especially the parts where I didn't really explain myself—so, I'm sorry. There were also strong objections to Watsuki's portrayal of the Shinsengumi, Yamanami Keisuke. Watsuki would like to expand upon both these points in a later volume. Of course, it would be best to answer each criticism, objection, and question personally, but due to the sheer volume of letters (not to mention Watsuki's schedule), that's just not possible. I suppose my best response is to create interesting work as a manga artist, so please keep on reading. See you next volume!

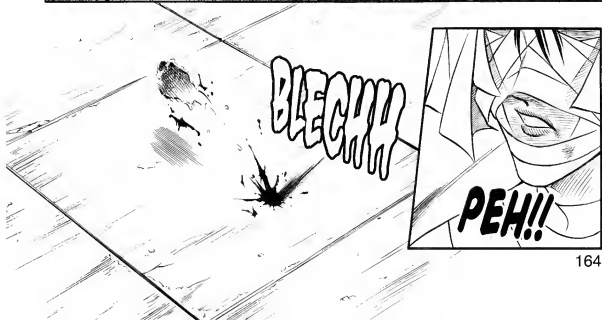
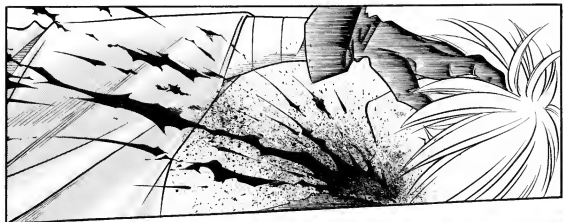




Act
138

Providence

SHUKKUKK



Act 38
Providence

NASTY.

HEH

**NEITHER
POISON
NOR
MEDICINE.**

伸宏
和月



"...AND
THE WEAK
DIE."

"IN THIS
WORLD,
THE STRONG
LIVE..."

THOSE
WORDS...

THOSE
WORDS...

...ARE
A LAW
OF
NATURE.

...WERE
MY GIFT
TO SŌJIRO.
BUT THEY
DESCRIBE...

...FAR
MORE
THAN
SWORDS.

THE MEN IN
THE GOVERNMENT
ARE WEAKER
THAN I, AND SO
HAVE NO RIGHT
TO POWER.

NOT
WHILE
THE
STRONGEST...

THE
WEAK HAVE
A DUTY
TO HELP
THE STRONG
TO LIVE.

MY
CONQUEST
OF THIS
NATION...

...ARE
TENDERS
OF THAT
FLAME.

THOSE
UNWORTHY
OF DOING
SO HAVE
NO REASON
TO LIVE.

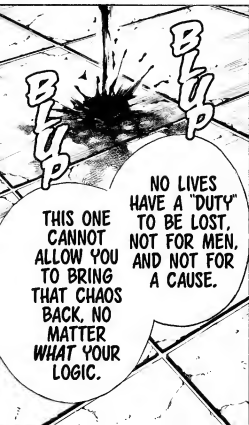


...IS A
KIND OF
PROVIDENCE!



CAN'T
YOU SEE
THAT FIGHTING
NATURE'S LAW
LEADS ONLY
TO FAILURE?

AS HITOKIRI,
YOU YOURSELF
FLOURISHED IN
THE BLOOD
STORMS
OF THE
BAKUMATSU.



THIS ONE
CANNOT
ALLOW YOU
TO BRING
THAT CHAOS
BACK, NO
MATTER
WHAT YOUR
LOGIC.

NO LIVES
HAVE A "DUTY"
TO BE LOST,
NOT FOR MEN,
AND NOT FOR
A CAUSE.



THOSE PEOPLE
YOU THINK OF AS
"FOOD" SURVIVED
THOSE SAME BLOOD
STORMS, AND ARE
FINALLY LIVING IN
PEACE!



NO!



A close-up of a character's face, partially obscured by a white bandage. The character has dark hair and a serious expression. The background is black.

IT IS A
LAW.

IT'S NOT
"LOGIC."



A character with long, light-colored hair is shown in a dynamic, forward-leaning pose. They are wearing a dark, flowing robe with a white sash. They are holding a sword with both hands, and the blade is extended. The background is filled with motion lines and a bright, jagged light source.

**THIS
ONE
DOES
NOT
SUBMIT
TO
SUCH
A
LAW!!**

◀ READ
THIS
WAY ▶

...HIS BODY
IS JUST
NOT GONNA
MAKE IT.

NOBODY
WILL EVER
CORRUPT
HIS SOUL...
BUT IF HE
KEEPS
PUSHING
HIMSELF
LIKE
THIS...

NEVER
YIELDING.
AS USUAL.



GNG

TP
YOUR
STUBBORNNESS
IS AS
UNRELENTING
AS EVER.

A PITY
THAT, WITH
SUCH STUPIDITY,
THE TOWERING
NAME OF HITOKIRI
BATTOSAI MUST
FALL TO
EARTH.

YOUR
MIND
ACCEPTS
IT...
...THOUGH
YOUR HEART
DOES NOT.

...CHOOSE
INSTEAD
A DEATH
OF GLORY!

RATHER
THAN
LIVING A
LIFE OF
MUNDANITY...

...IN THE
HISTORY
THAT I
MAKE!

THEN
YOUR
NAME,
AT
LEAST,
WILL
LIVE
ON...

THIS ONE HAS
NO INTENTION
OF HAVING
HIS NAME IN
YOUR HISTORY.

KNG

HOH

RATHER,
HE WOULD
LEAVE IT
IN A
RECORD
OF
PEACE!!



SHISHIO-
SAMA!!

YOU
JUST
WON'T
LISTEN,
WILL
YOU.

HYOH!!





YOU
LEAVE
ME NO
CHOICE!

ONE
WAY OR
ANOTHER,
YOU WILL
FALL!



BOOM

!!!



...GUNPOWDER...

KENSHIN
!!





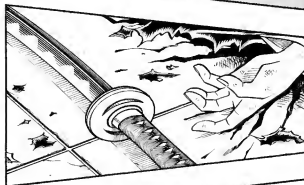
**THE
SECOND**
...

ぐれんかいな
**GUREN
KAINA!!**

紅蓮腕!!!

SECRET
...







NINE
MINUTES.
53
SECONDS.



SO
THERE WAS
NO NEED
TO WORRY.
AFTER ALL.



NO
AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI,
EITHER.

FEH! YOU
DISAPPOINT
ME.

WNGH



MAGNIFICENT,
MASTER!!
WHO ELSE
WOULD EVER
HAVE
THOUGHT...

GUREN
KAINA!!
GUNPOWDER
IN YOUR
GAUNTLET!!



JUST SEE
THAT
THIS IS
CLEANED.

SILENCE,
COWARD
!

YES,
M'LORD.

SHK



LETTING
DOWN YOUR
GUARD AFTER
FINISHING ONE
WOUNDED
MAN?

SAITŌ
!!

!!

SHISHIO
MAKOTO...
I'VE COME
FOR YOUR
HEAD!!

SUCH
ARROGANCE
ALWAYS
HAS BEEN
YOUR
WEAKNESS.

GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

*A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in **Rurouni Kenshin**. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because **Kenshin** is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of **Kenshin**’s sakabatō and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “Hitokiri Battōsai,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “Battōsai Himura.”*

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names **Kawakami Gensai**, for example, was also known as “Hitokiri Gensai.”

Homura Dama

By purposefully chipping the edge of an heirloom blade by master swordsmith Arai Hakurō, the madman Shishio Makoto can ensure that his blade never loses its edge—an edge fueled into slashing and burning flame by the flesh of the many men which it has slain over the course of Shishio’s wicked life. First of Shishio’s “secret moves” to be revealed in this volume, given here as “Burning Soul.”

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist **patriots** who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Juppongatana

Written with the characters for “ten” and “swords,” Shishio’s **Juppongatana** are literally that—the ten generals or “swords” he plans to use in his overthrow of Japan

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of **Himura Kenshin**

kenjutsu

The art of fencing; sword-arts; *kendō*

Amakakeru Ryū no Hirameki

Lit., “Heavens-Bridging Dragon Spark” (as in spark of “inspiration,” not “fire” or “flame”). Final or “succession” move of **Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū**, it incorporates everything **Kenshin** has been taught so far—including the overriding will to *live*. Also known as “Dragon Flight of Heaven.”

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear...”).

dojo

Martial-arts training hall

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than **-san**; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by **Kenshin**, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the **Tokugawa Bakufu**; renamed **Tokyo** (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

Guren Kaina

Second of the madman Shishio Makoto’s “secret moves” to be revealed in this volume, the **Guren Kaina** (lit., “arm of crimson-flame”) ignites gunpowder stored in Shishio’s gauntlet to create a powerful (and unexpected!) explosion

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s “real” name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as "-san").

Shinsengumi

Elite, notorious, government-sanctioned and exceptionally skilled swordsman-supporters of the military government (**Bakufu**) which had ruled Japan for nearly 250 years, the **Shinsengumi** ("newly selected corps") were established in 1863 to suppress the **loyalists** and to restore law and order to the blood-soaked streets of **Kyoto**

shōgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shōgunate

See **Tokugawa Bakufu**

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of "**Edo**" to "**Tokyo**" is a marker of the start of the **Meiji Restoration**

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you're more likely to find in **Rurouni Kenshin**—is the "superior-to-inferior" form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

Kyoto

Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the **Meiji Restoration** in 1868

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; **Ishin Shishi**

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the **Tokugawa Bakufu** and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

Oniwabanshū

Elite group of *onmitsu* or "spies" of the **Edo** period, also known as *ninja* or *shinobi*

patriots

Another term for **Ishin Shishi**...and, when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

Ryūtsuisen

Kenshin's "Dragon-Hammer Strike"

sakabatō

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama

Honorific. The respectful equivalent of **-san**, **-sama** is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.